

**APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING
February 17, 2017**

TESTIMONY OF

CONNECTICUT FLAGSHIP PRODUCING THEATRES (CFPT)

On behalf of the Connecticut Flagship Producing Theatres which include Goodspeed Musicals, Hartford Stage, Long Wharf Theatre, the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, Westport County Playhouse and Yale Repertory Theatre, we first would like to thank the Appropriations Committee and your colleagues in the legislature who continue to recognize and support us. Today we ask that you will consider restoring our appropriation, which was eliminated in the Governor's proposed budget.

Unlike many of the Performing Arts Centers with which you may be familiar, the Flagship Producing Theatres, each of which is a non-profit organization, create theatre from scratch, right here in Connecticut, annually infusing the state with \$42 million in economic activity.

Collectively:

- We create more than 1,700 jobs for artists and administrators right here in Connecticut
- We spend just under \$26 million in taxable payrolls
- We purchase local materials in excess of \$6.6 million
- We spend over \$2.5 million on local printing and advertising and over \$1.3 million on hotel nights and apartment rentals for guest artist housing
- We attract nearly 388,000 regular patrons
- The return on the State's investment is consistently over 400%

Beyond our *economic* impact, we also have an essential *community* impact. Each of our organizations has partnerships with schools and local organizations, offering a vast array of programs ranging from student matinees to library discussions on inclusivity to training teachers and young theatre professionals. Collectively, **we serve over 40,000 students of all ages throughout the state.** Our impact can be exemplified through the words of Dr. Ryan Campbell, Language Arts Teacher at Connecticut IB Academy, whose students participated in Goodspeed's Arts Education Collaboration:

I thought that having students develop a character and a story prior to reading/viewing the play was an effective strategy. The idea that a gesture or a word itself can convey a story was a very important lesson. I think that helped students better understand the work involved in acting and playwriting. I would recommend this program to others and I will work to secure future opportunities such as this for my students.

Participants in our theatre education programs gain tangible skills in communications, critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and creativity. A patron of Hartford Stage reported:

I personally have never seen my son display so much happiness while participating in a program. I saw a side of him that I sincerely never knew he had and for that I thank you, oh so much. It has been challenging for me, as a single parent of a child with Asperger's, to find unique programs where he could truly be himself and have his unique qualities celebrated and not just seen as a barrier by his teachers and peers.

Finally, our organizations continuously receive national recognition which enhances Connecticut's reputation across the country. In 2014, *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* premiered on Broadway and won four Tony Awards, including Best Musical. This show began at Hartford Stage and is now touring across America, and will be produced internationally. This April, *Indecent* and *Anastasia* will both open on Broadway, having premiered last season at Yale Repertory Theatre and Hartford Stage, respectively. *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn*, a new musical created at Goodspeed, just completed a run on Broadway as well. Productions at our theatres have collectively won nearly 100 national awards, including 5 Tony Awards for Outstanding Regional Theatre. Just this past year, the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center was presented with the National Medal of Arts. Our reputations across the field remain well-known.

We appreciate and applaud your continued investment in our future. However, eliminating or reducing this investment will have a direct and negative measurable impact on the local economy, and immeasurable impact on the quality of life for the students and citizens of our state. As businesses and residents make decisions to relocate outside of Connecticut, it is essential that organizations such as ours sustain the ability to fulfill our missions; this cut drastically affects that ability. Please consider restoring our appropriation. Thank you for your time and consideration.